

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 1-11, and amend the claims as follows:

1-11. Cancelled.

Please add the following new claims:

12. (New) A clamping apparatus for use with a top drive for gripping and turning a drill string formed of pipe, the clamping apparatus comprising:

gripping members positioned to grip and support the pipe;

a drive member for moving the gripping members radially inwardly into a pipe gripping position and radially outwardly to a pipe releasing position; and

an attachment member for connecting the clamping apparatus to the top drive for wellbore drilling.

13. (New) The clamping apparatus of claim 12, wherein the drive member includes a hydraulic system.

14. (New) The clamping apparatus of claim 12, further comprising a stabbing spear extending out between the gripping members and formed to fit within the pipe to be gripped by the clamping apparatus.

15. (New) The clamping apparatus of claim 14, wherein the stabbing spear includes a drilling fluid conduit for conducting a flow of drilling fluid from the top drive.

16. (New) The clamping apparatus of claim 14, wherein the stabbing spear includes a seal adapted to seal between the stabbing spear and the pipe to be gripped.

17. (New) The clamping apparatus of claim 12, further comprising a drilling fluid conduit for conducting a flow of drilling fluid from the top drive.

18. (New) The clamping apparatus of claim 12, wherein the pipe comprises casing.

19. (New) The clamping apparatus of claim 18, wherein the drive member includes a hydraulic system.

20. (New) The clamping apparatus of claim 18, further comprising a stabbing spear extending out between the gripping members and formed to fit within the pipe to be gripped by the clamping apparatus.

21. (New) The clamping apparatus of claim 12, wherein the gripping members are adapted to transfer torque to the pipe.

22. (New) The clamping apparatus of claim 12, wherein the clamping apparatus is rotatable by the top drive.

23. (New) The clamping apparatus of claim 22, wherein the gripping members are adapted to transfer torque to the pipe.

24. (New) A gripping apparatus for use in connection with a top drive assembly, comprising:

a housing defining a central passageway sized for receipt of a tubular, the housing being coupled to the top drive assembly for rotation therewith;

a plurality of gripping elements disposed within the housing and displaceable between disengaged and engaged positions; and

a powered system adapted to selectively drive the plurality of gripping members between the disengaged and engaged positions.

25. (New) The gripping apparatus of claim 24, wherein the powered system comprises a hydraulic system.

26. (New) The gripping apparatus of claim 24, wherein the plurality of gripping members are moved radially when displaced between the disengaged and engaged positions.

27. (New) The gripping apparatus of claim 24, wherein the tubular comprises casing.

28. (New) The gripping apparatus of claim 27, wherein the plurality of gripping members are moved radially when displaced between the disengaged and engaged positions.

29. (New) The gripping apparatus of claim 24, wherein the housing is coupled to a drive shaft of the top drive assembly.

30. (New) The gripping apparatus of claim 24, wherein the plurality of gripping members are adapted to engage an exterior portion of the tubular.

31. (New) A method for gripping and turning a tubular using a top drive, comprising:

coupling a gripping apparatus to the top drive, the gripping apparatus having radially movable gripping elements adapted to engage the tubular;

actuating the gripping elements to engage the tubular; and

rotating the top drive, thereby rotating the tubular.

32. (New) The method of claim 31, wherein actuating the gripping elements comprises moving the gripping elements radially.

33. (New) The method of claim 31, wherein the gripping elements are actuated using a hydraulic fluid.

34. (New) The method of claim 31, further comprising transferring torque to the tubular.

35. (New) The method of claim 31, wherein the tubular comprises a casing.

36. (New) The method of claim 31, further comprising inserting a fluid conduit into the tubular.

37. (New) The method of claim 36, wherein the fluid conduit comprises a gripping tool.

38. (New) A clamping apparatus for use with a top drive for gripping and turning a drill string formed of pipe, the clamping apparatus comprising:
gripping members positioned to grip and support the pipe;
a drive member for moving the gripping members at least one of radially inwardly into a pipe gripping position or radially outwardly to a pipe releasing position; and
an attachment member for connecting the clamping apparatus to the top drive for wellbore drilling.